

Michigan  
Department  
of Human  
Services

Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
(517) 373-7394

# Articles in Today's Clips

**Friday, June 27, 2008**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

---

TOPIC	PAGE
Homelessness	2-3
Charities	4-5
Health Care	6
Substance Abuse	7-8
State Budget	9-10
Press Release	11



June 27, 2008

## One day, one stop helps homeless

Lansing event connects more than 700 to services

*Christine Rook*  
*Lansing State Journal*

Justin Thayer never imagined he'd be homeless.

He's 23, muscular and skilled at running cable wires.

But his failure to pay a ticket resulted in the loss of his driver's license and ultimately his job as a cable technician.

"I ended up homeless for one reason," said Thayer, who now lives at a Lansing shelter. "I lost my license."

On Thursday, he stood patiently in line outside the field house at Eastern High School - No. 109 among more than 700 people who were homeless and needy and sought help throughout the day.

They made their way to the field house where the city and Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network hosted Lansing's first Project Homeless Connect. The event was designed to deliver health checks, pedicures and counseling services - not just brochures - to the needy.

The initiative coincided with the formal release Thursday of a report profiling the homeless situation across Greater Lansing.

More than 3,230 homeless people received services in 2007, according to the report prepared by Lansing's Human Relations and Community Services department. Of those people in need, more than 52 percent were women and children.

The community profile painted a nuanced picture, but it was Thursday's event with its lines of people in need that really illustrated the diversity of the area's poor.

There was, for example, Geraldine Anderson, 49, of Lansing. She has a home, but just barely. After paying rent and food, she has nothing left for her teens, she said.

"From what I heard, I can sign up for Section 8," she said, "and they have vouchers for furniture and everything."

Anderson stood to the side, sipping on bottled water handed to her in the 85-degree heat. She explained her situation, her inability to hold a job because of physical ailments caused years ago when she was addicted to alcohol. She hasn't had a drink in nine years, she said, but the damage is done.

## Overcoming hurdles

According to the city report, physical and medical problems, mental illness, alcohol abuse and drug abuse are major hurdles for Lansing's homeless. Many are unemployed, and the area's homeless are disproportionately black.

Organizers of Project Homeless Connect aimed Thursday to whittle down the problem.

"We actually have openings in our transition programs," said Kirsten Gonzales, an advocate with Loaves & Fishes in Lansing, referring to efforts to help the homeless live independently. "I'm hoping to get quite a few candidates."

It was that expectation that made the day special.

"We hope to place people in houses today," said Joan Jackson Johnson, Project Homeless Connect organizer and director of Lansing's Department of Human Relations and Community Services.

## Experts, expertise

Thayer and others filed in, explained their problems and were assigned an escort. The escort then took each person around to the dozens of tables and stations to connect them with needed services.

Thomas M. Cooley Law School representatives offered expertise, and dental experts gave exams. Blood tests were taken, injured pets received care, and substance-abuse advice was offered.

Roughly 200 people from a variety of organizations volunteered to help. They handed out water, resupplied the donut table, escorted those in need, provided pedicures and simply showed that they cared.

"I used to be homeless," said Bill Woods, 46, of Lansing.

His downfall, he admitted, was drugs and alcohol, but he found his way into an outreach program that helped him clean up his life. Thursday was his chance to give back.

"People aren't homeless by choice," he said.

## In contact with help

Project Connect originated in San Francisco where the first one-day event was held in 2004. The goal was to put the needy in direct contact with services.

"Lansing today joins a nationwide partnership of 170 cities that are doing Project Connect," said Philip Mangano, executive director of the United States Interagency Council on Homeless in Washington, D.C. "One day, one stop, but it makes a big difference."

Contact Christine Rook at 377-1261 or [clrook@lsj.com](mailto:clrook@lsj.com).

---



# Linden 6-year-old 'Takes a Stand,' sells lemonade to benefit Children's Miracle Network

Posted by Elizabeth Shaw | The Flint Journal June 27, 2008 12:01PM

**LINDEN, Michigan** -- First-grader Sam Dunkley is turning lemons into lemonade for the Children's Miracle Network this weekend at Linden's Summer Happening festival.

On March 6, 2002, Sam was born six weeks early at Genesys Regional Medical Center, where he stayed for two weeks until he was healthy and strong enough to go home.

"From my standpoint as the mom I was in fear of losing him every day. I just planted myself next to his incubator and stayed right there. I don't even remember eating that whole time," said Mary Dunkley, 39, of Linden. "Today he's perfectly normal and fine and you'd never even know he was a preemie. We always said if we ever won the lottery we'd want to help out some charity that helps children."

In the past year, the Children's Miracle Network has raised \$1,039,812 to help children and their families undergoing pediatric services at Hurley Regional Medical Center.

The Network has paid for everything from high-tech critical care equipment to playroom toys and a private living area for parents whose child is hospitalized in neonatal or pediatric intensive care.

It spent more than \$30,000 for a "hospital on wheels" that provides emergency neonatal transport from other local hospitals to Hurley's state-of-the-art neonatal intensive care facility.

"Our transport team was on standby for Sam. Thankfully he ended up not needing it but his mom has never forgotten we were there, ready and waiting to help her son," said CMN director Linda Tracy-Stephens.

Sam's lemonade stand is part of Sunkist's "Take a Stand" program, a collaboration with Rubbermaid and Domino/C&H Sugar that helps kids ages 7 to 12 raise funds for their favorite charity.

Last summer more than 15,000 kids in the U.S. and Canada signed up. Now in its fifth year, Sunkist hopes to give out 20,000 free lemonade stands this year.

The Dunkley family paid for all the drink supplies themselves, and are asking for donations of 25 cents per glass.

"Whether you pay 10 cents or \$10, it's up to you. But for \$10 you'll get a glass and kiss," joked Dunkley. "Either way, it's all going to the Children's Miracle Network."

Last week Sam visited Hurley to see for himself what the Children's Miracle Network does on a daily basis.

"He saw a baby barely over one pound. Even at six, you could see it made a lot of sense to him," said Tracy-Stephens. "It's thrilling to see children this young understand the value of volunteering and helping other children."

## Take a Stand

- The Sunkist "Take a Stand" lemonade stand for the Children's Miracle Network will be set up in front of the Linden Mill Pond.

- Sam's work hours: 1-3 p.m. Friday, 12:30-5 p.m. Saturday, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday.

Sam will staff his stand each day during the downtown festival, with older brother Josh, 14, helping out.

"I'm very proud my son is so willing to do this. If what he does inspires other kids in the community, that really says something," said Dunkley. "You can't start kids out early enough realizing it's not always about them, it's about everybody."

© 2008 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

# Group abandons petition for state universal health care

BY DAWSON BELL • FREE PRESS LANSING BUREAU • June 27, 2008

LANSING – A petition drive to seek voter approval for universal health in Michigan ended Friday as organizers admitted they were far shy of collecting the minimum number of signatures.

At a morning news conference across the street from the state Capitol, members of the group Health Care for Michigan said the petition drive would be replaced with a lobbying effort in the state Legislature and U.S. Congress.

HCM Chairman John Freeman said the coalition of labor, religious and health care provider organizations collected about 130,000 signatures, well short of the 380,000 needed to qualify the proposed amendment to the state constitution for the November ballot. The campaign fell short in large part because of a lack of financial resources, Freeman said, a shortfall he attributed to intense competition in a crowded political year for both ballot proposals and candidates.

The universal health care campaign succeeded, however, in “moving the discussion from talk to concrete action,” Freeman said.

Backers of the petition drive said they were disappointed because they believe the proposal would have been approved by voters if it qualified for the ballot. It would have required the Legislature to enact laws ensuring affordable and accessible health care for every Michigan resident.

They said health care remains a top concern of voters and said Michigan and the country are moving inexorably toward some form of universal coverage.

“We’re not done. We’re not finished,” said Patrick Gahagen, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Detroit, “We’re not defeated. We’re not going away.”

## Student alcohol use at 45%

Posted by [Jacob Carpenter | Jackson Citizen Patriot](#) June 27, 2008 09:14AM

The number of Jackson County minors who have consumed alcohol is in line with national averages listed in a federal report released this week.

About 45 percent of Jackson County students in grades six through 12 have consumed alcohol at some point, according to a 2006 survey — a percentage near the average for students of the same age nationally.

Nearly 55 percent of minors between the ages of 12 and 20 have consumed alcohol at some point, a figure raised by higher age groups that were counted in the federal study and weren't counted in Jackson County's report.

"Typically, when you look at these types of statistics and when you look at (Jackson County's) numbers, we might be a couple above or a couple below the national averages," said Kelsey Winston, coordinator of the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition.

In Jackson County, 2 percent of sixth-graders reported they have consumed alcohol in the past month, compared to 10 percent of eighth-graders, 33 percent of 10th-graders and 41 percent of 12th-graders.

About 158,000 people were polled from 2002 to 2006 for the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's study.

Jackson County's report is culled from student surveys and state studies on the matter.

The federal report also stated that nearly one-half of minors who consumed alcohol in the past month received it from someone older than 21.

Among Jackson County students who reported alcohol consumption, nearly one in three said they received alcohol from somebody older than 21 and about one in six received alcohol from a parent or guardian.

Jackson County Undersheriff Tom Finco said his experience has been that most county minors receive alcohol from a friend or acquaintance older than 21 who minors pay to buy for them.

"Once in a while, you find parents that provide alcohol for their kids to have a controlled environment," Finco said. "They're really not doing their children any favors."

The Jackson County Sheriff's Office attempts to deter alcohol transactions by periodically testing retailers to ensure they aren't selling to minors and finding those responsible for furnishing alcohol to minors involved in car accidents.

Of the roughly 120 random checks of county stores since March, fewer than 5 percent failed the test, Finco said.

At Jackson County schools, 10th-graders participate in a three-day program educating them about alcohol-related issues as well as sessions about drug dangers in earlier grades.

Still, there has to be a shift in the country's thought pattern for some lessons to sink in, said Steve Sukta, health-education coordinator for the Jackson County Intermediate School District.

"Alcohol use is a real tough one because it's so ingrained in our culture," Sukta said. "It's so readily acceptable in our adult population, so when kids are becoming adults, they feel it's part of growing up."

Kevin Hardman, 53, of Jackson said parents and friends need to take a more active role in preventing alcohol consumption at an early age.

"People need to not keep turning their head away," said Hardman, a recovering alcoholic. "They need to show them something that can turn them away from alcohol instead of saying there's nothing to do."





June 27, 2008

## State lawmakers poised to approve budget

### Morning update

*Chris Christoff*  
*Special to the State Journal*

What a difference an extra \$1.5 billion and an election year make.

The Legislature was poised today to approve most of a \$44-billion budget for next fiscal year, ahead of its unofficial deadline Tuesday.

No all-night sessions. No government shutdown. No partisan insults hurled back and forth.

Not that it was easy. State revenue will fall \$400 million short of the 2008-09 spending plan Gov. Jennifer Granholm proposed in February, so budget knives have been flashing.

The result is that schools, local governments and Granholm's pet projects will get less money than she wanted.

Some portions of the budget may have to wait for final agreements. But there's none of last fall's drama, when a \$1.8-billion deficit and rancor over tax increases ground state government to a brief halt as lawmakers stumbled to a messy conclusion.

"I don't think anyone was proud of how we looked last year," said House Speaker Andy Dillon, D-Redford Township. "There was a common desire to let the public see we could work together."

With an extra \$1.5 billion in tax revenue and House members anxious to hit the campaign trail for their re-elections, negotiations have been relatively swift and civil.

"They don't want to go back home and campaign with an unfinished budget hanging over their head. Not with these low approval ratings," said Mike Boulos, executive director of the President's Council, State Universities of Michigan, which represents the state's 15 public universities.

Boulos referred to a recent poll that suggests only 11% of Michigan adults approve of the job the Legislature is doing.

Boulos was resigned to fiscal realities that will give universities just a 1% increase in state funding, instead of the 3% increase Granholm proposed. Community colleges will get a 2% increase.

Public schools will receive much less than the maximum increase of \$216 per pupil Granholm proposed in February. Exact amounts were being debated Thursday evening.

One sticking point is Granholm's plan to spread \$32 million to some districts that have high dropout rates so they can build small high schools where students would receive more attention. Schools would rather spread that money across the board, said Donald Wotruba, lobbyist for the Michigan Association of School Boards.

He said with costs rising fast for schools, especially gasoline costs, "It's the wrong year to put that much money into a new program."

State budget director Robert Emerson said Granholm insists on the small schools plan, even with less than \$32 million, to attack dropout rates that exceed 40% in some districts.

"It has to be transformational," Emerson said.

Local governments will get a 2% boost in state revenue sharing to pay for police, fire, recreation and maintenance programs -- not 4% as first proposed.

Laid-off workers will benefit from \$15 million going to the governor's No Worker Left Behind program that will pay them to attend community colleges. Granholm had called for \$40 million.

Conference committees were scheduled Thursday night and this morning to hammer out final details for most budget items; the House and Senate were prepared to give final approval today.

"By Friday, we should all go home happy," said an optimistic Sen. Ron Jelinek, R-Three Oaks, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

He said he had an agreement to finish the budget by July 1 with his House counterpart, Rep. George Cushingberry, D-Detroit.

"Everyone wanted to see it done," Jelinek said Wednesday, after a general budget agreement was reached in private negotiations. "We weren't talking about new revenues, so we had to work with what we had."

Chris Christoff is Lansing Bureau Chief for the Detroit Free Press. Contact him at 517-372-8660 or [christoff@freepress.com](mailto:christoff@freepress.com).

---

Michigan Department of Human Services News Release

Contact: Colleen Steinman (517) 373-7394

**Woods named director of DHS Communications**



June 27, 2008

Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Ismael Ahmed announced today the appointment of Edward Woods III as director of the DHS Office of Communications effective June 30, 2008.

"Edward has demonstrated significant administrative skills as Director of Communications for the Michigan Department of Management and Budget (DMB) in leading the Governor's Buy Michigan First kick-off tour, coordinating the 1<sup>st</sup> State of Michigan Conference for Public Purchasing Professionals, and enhancing communication with state agencies and within DMB," Ahmed said. "We are extremely pleased to welcome him to the DHS executive team."

Prior to joining DMB's management staff in 2005, Woods served as operations manager for the Michigan Works! agency in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties and chief of staff for the City of Benton Harbor. He is an adjunct professor of Political Science at Western Michigan University and a current member of the Lansing Community College Board of Trustees.

Woods states, "I look forward to embracing and contributing to the DHS team to fulfill the department's vision, mission and values."

Edward Woods III completed his undergraduate studies at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama and holds a masters degree in public administration from Western Michigan University. He is married and the father of two children.

For more information go to [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs)